



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Benefits Administration
Washington, D.C. 20420

July 9, 2013

Director (00/21)
All VBA Regional Offices and Centers

In Reply Refer To: 211
Fast Letter 13-15

SUBJ: Interim Procedures for Psychiatric Examinations Following the May 18, 2013, Release of the 5th Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-V)

Purpose and Background

DSM-V was released to the public on May 18, 2013. The new edition includes changes in diagnostic criteria as well as the addition of new mental health diagnoses. In order to allow time for field employees to learn the new diagnostic criteria, Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) plans to transition to utilization of the new DSM-V criteria on approximately October 1, 2013.

Interim Procedures

Prior to the transition, VBA will make necessary changes to Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) and our electronic training support systems. VBA will also determine if regulatory and procedural changes are required, and notify field employees as applicable. This is consistent with the transition plan for Veterans Health Administration (VHA) clinicians and administrators. Local VHA facility leadership is required to ensure that all clinicians become competent in using the diagnostic criteria of the new DSM and any associated changes in diagnostic processes by the time of transition.

Effective the date of issue of this fast letter, until further guidance is provided, all VA examination requests must clearly state that examiners (including contractors and fee basis examiners) are to use the diagnostic criteria in DSM-IV. In the remarks section of DBQs, the examiner must document that the diagnoses obtained were based on the criteria contained in DSM-IV. VHA clinicians will also be required to state in treatment notes that the criteria contained in DSM-IV are being used until the time of transition to DSM-V.

Director (00/21)

Questions

Please submit questions concerning this fast letter to [VAVBAWAS/CO/21Q&A](#).

/S/
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